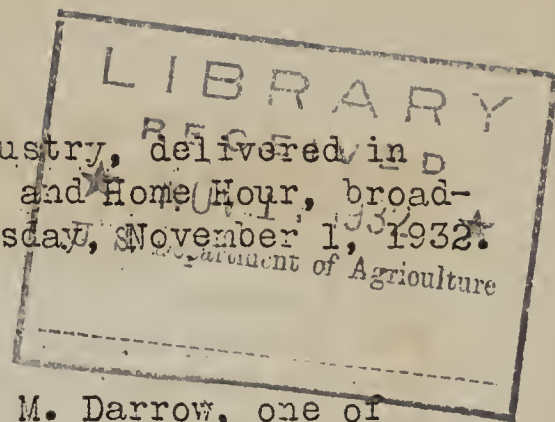


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, November 1, 1932.



In the Garden Calendar period last Tuesday, George M. Darrow, one of the Department Plant Breeders, told you how he and his associates are progressing with their work of developing new varieties of small fruits, especially strawberries and raspberries. As suggested in our talk last week, plant breeders do not just start out to develop new varieties without a definite object or goal before them. For example, some years back the preserve manufacturers of the country were complaining that no variety of strawberry then on the market possessed all of the qualities required for making a completely satisfactory preserve.

Darrow and his associates undertook the job of creating a variety that would meet the requirements of the preserving trade and at the same time one that would also be a good market berry. No variety then grown had all the qualities such as firmness, tart flavor, and the right color of flesh to make the ideal preserve. Some varieties had the color of flesh, others had the tartness, and perhaps the firmness, but no one possessed all of the desirable qualities. So Darrow and the men working with him selected the best of these for parents, and set about to cross them in an attempt to produce a new variety that had all of the desired characteristics of a preserving berry.

Well, last week he told you that as a result of crosses made in the spring of 1923, three varieties have already been introduced. Among these is the Blakemore, a superior variety for preserving also for marketing. Three more varieties have been selected for introduction, and there are still 97 seedlings or varieties resulting from the 1923 crosses under observation. It would be hard to guess how many more good varieties may come out of that collection.

The main point that I want to leave with you is that the plant breeders do not go it blind. They set out with a definite purpose, to produce new fruits, or other plants, for specific purposes. And I may say also that when they do produce a valuable new variety, and this is especially true of the workers in the Department, they do not benefit personally, but these new varieties are available to all of the people through commercial channels.

By the way, still speaking of plant breeders, some day I want to tell you about the work of the late Dr. Van Fleet of the Department of Agriculture. His hobby was breeding roses. I say hobby, because he had this work well started before he entered the Department. We already enjoy several new varieties of roses as a result of his work. The Department still has a collection of seedling roses that Dr. Van Fleet left, and our men are studying them with a view to selecting other new varieties for you rose lovers.

Well, I can't spend all my time talking about the plant breeders. Here are a few suggestions for seasonal work in the garden and orchard.

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For orchard owners, the watchword at this time of the fall is "Be on your guard to protect trees against mice and rabbits." The biologists of the Department have announced that pine mice and meadow mice are once again increasing in numbers. If the winter is severe, mice may cause serious damage to fruit trees. Poisoning is the most effective means of controlling these pests. Now this is important: The Bureau of Biological Survey has made arrangements whereby orchard owners can get poisoned bait for mice at cost. Get in touch with your county agent, or send direct to the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for further information on how to get the poisoned bait for control of mice in orchards.

Of course we always have the problem of protecting fruit trees from the raids of rabbits. I have had the best results from close woven wire cloth or netting put around the trunk of each and every tree in my orchard. Some people use roofing paper to protect the tree trunks from rabbits. Others use tree washes to repel the rabbits. But my experience with these washes has been that rains wash off the protective coating and I have to renew it several times during the winter. Of course, one of the best ways of protecting a small orchard is to surround it with a rabbit-proof fence.

One more thing about handling the fruit trees at this season of the year. You know, there was an unusual amount of pear blight disease this past summer. Now is the time to cut out every particle of the blighted wood before the trees become entirely dormant. Be sure to make all cuts several inches below where the cankered bark appears; in other words, cut back to healthy wood. Then paint the wounds with tar. If the tar is too thick, thin it a trifle with creosote.

Here's an important November chore for gardeners. Clean up the trash along the fence rows, and the remains of old crops left on the ground. That's one way to get rid of part of the insects and diseases. For instance, yesterday morning I found large numbers of Mexican bean beetles hiding under some old frosted bush lima beans in my garden. I carefully gathered up those bean vines and burned them. I hope that will cut down the bean beetle population at my place next summer.

Well, goodbye, and I'll be with you again next Tuesday.